ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NV-040-02-031

COTTONWOOD (KIRKEBY) WATER PIPELINE EXTENSION

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Ely Field Office

Prepared by:
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December 19, 2003

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

This environmental assessment (EA) is tiered to and incorporates by reference the Programmatic Pipeline and Spring Development Environmental Assessment EA-NV-040-5-29 (April, 1986). The Programmatic EA is available for review in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely Field Office.

Need for the Proposal

The need for the proposal is to improve the rangeland health and watershed condition in the Cottonwood Allotment. A need to improve the rangeland resources (plant communities) of the Cottonwood Allotment has been identified by ten years of rangeland monitoring data gathered for this allotment.

Relationship to Planning

The proposed action is in conformance with the Schell Management Framework Plan (MFP), dated April, 1983, and the Schell Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and subsequent Record of Decision approved June 1983 and July 1983, respectively. This action would help to implement the livestock management decisions from these approved land use planning documents. The MFP decision RM-4.1 states in pertinent part, "Install livestock management facilities, where feasible, or assist grazing permittee to develop those facilities consistent with the findings of EA's." The proposed action is consistent with the Lincoln County Public Land and Natural Resource Management Plan (LCPLNRMP) of November 1997 as well as the Lincoln County Elk Management Plan dated July 1999. The LCPLNRMP states under Grazing Policies on page 15, that "Grazing shall be managed to support a healthy range resource."

The Cottonwood Allotment Evaluation of 1993 and the Cottonwood Allotment Management Action Selection Report of April, 1997 both specifically recommend developing water from the existing Cottonwood Water Pipeline as a means of achieving the vegetative resource objectives for the allotment.

The pipeline extension proposal would contribute to achieving the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area Resource Advisory Council Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration and Healthy Rangelands. Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration were developed by the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council, and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on February 12, 1997. Standard 2 (Ecosystem Components) states in part, " Watersheds should possess the necessary ecological components to achieve state water quality criteria, maintain ecological processes, and sustain appropriate uses."

Issues

Rangeland health and watershed condition were identified during the internal scoping process as the main issues in regard to the proposed action.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to install approximately 4 miles of 1-1/4" water pipeline in generally a west/east direction through the Cottonwood Allotment (00132) in South Spring Valley, Nevada (See Map A). The Cottonwood Allotment is a category "M" (maintain) allotment. The maintain category allotments were identified in 1987 as having second priority for funding of rangeland improvements and developing Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) and third priority for use supervision. The water pipeline extension would begin on public lands from the existing pipeline at the Cottonwood Corral (Kirkeby pipeline- Project No. 0400) and would trend in an easterly direction along the 6,020 foot contour line, paralleling a prominent two track road. The legal location of the Cottonwood Corral is T.9N., R. 68E., Section 30, NE 1/4 of the NW 1/4. The pipe would be laid at a depth of 18 inches with a ripper mounted on a bulldozer. The pipeline would run through Wyoming sagebrush/perennial grass range and would cross small draws in which winterfat (white sage) grows. A backhoe would be used in three places for the installation of three troughs along the pipeline. The legal locations of the three troughs, from west to east, are as follows:

Trough #1 T. 9N., R. 68E., Section 21 SE 1/4 of SW 1/4.

Trough #2 T. 9N., R. 68E., Section 22 NW 1/4 of SE 1/4.

Trough #3 T. 9N., R. 68E., Section 23 NW 1/4 of NW 1/4.

The entire legal description for the Cottonwood pipeline extension is: T. 9 N., R. 68 E., Sections 30, 29, 22,21,20 (see map A). The permittee, Lyman Huntsman, and the cattle foreman, Paul Branham, would provide the pipeline, troughs, attachments and valves, and assume maintenance responsibility through a cooperative agreement. Maintenance could include digging up portions of the line for necessary repairs. The Ely BLM would place the pipeline into the ground. The project would be built to BLM standards and specifications.

It is planned the pipeline would run water for about 300 head of cattle between January 1 and March 15 each year, depending upon water flow availability. Water would also be available for wildlife, mainly antelope. The pipeline would be shut down the remainder of the year, when cattle are not authorized to graze the area.

Construction of the pipeline would commence during the summer of 2004 and would take from one to two weeks. Construction methods are described in the Proposed Action portion of the Programmatic EA. The pipeline would be buried to protect it from adverse weather conditions and from trampling by livestock or wildlife.

It is not expected that the pipeline would be constructed during the migratory bird nesting period, from May 1 to July 15. If the pipeline is constructed during that period, a survey of the pipeline extension route would be completed prior to construction by the Ely Field Office wildlife biologist in order to determine if construction can proceed. No troughs would be placed within any silty soil whitesage plant communities. Bird ladders would be placed in each trough as escape ramps for wildlife. Small overflow ponds may be constructed at each trough site to capture excess flow and enhance water availability. Cross-country travel by vehicles and construction equipment would be permitted along the pipeline route during construction and for maiantenance purposes. Heavy equipment used in the construction process would be washed prior to entering the area, in order to help prevent weed establishment.

BLM would supervise and monitor construction of the pipeline to insure that specifications and standard operating procedures (SOP's) are followed, particularly that impacts to vegetation are kept to a minimum. SOP's for this proposed action are listed in the programmatic pipeline and spring development EA. SOP's to be followed for this project are also listed in Appendix I to this document.

Upon completion of the pipeline, a final inspection would be made to ensure compliance with specifications. Any deficiencies would be corrected at that time. Periodic compliance checks for maintenance would be made by the rangeland specialist following pipeline completion in conjunction with routine rangeland monitoring of the Cottonwood Allotment.

The vegetative resource would continue to be monitored in the long term using several rangeland monitoring methods. Monitoring and data collection would continue in the form of establishing key areas, monitoring utilization levels, frequency trend, ecological condition, cover, observed apparent trend, actual use reports, and compliance checks. This data would be collected by the rangeland management specialist and/or wildlife biologist.

The disturbed area would also be monitored following construction for noxious or invasive weeds or nonnative species. Further mitigation measures for weeds are identified in the Noxious Weed Risk Assessment in Appendix II.

The State of Nevada Water Engineer has determined that new water rights applications need to be submitted whenever water is developed beyond a 40 acre water source area. Therefore, before the proposed action is implemented, Lyman Huntsman will need to submit a new water rights application for a change in place of use. BLM would submit a water rights application for wildlife use (antelope) for the new places of use (new trough locations).

No Action Alternative

Under the no action alternative, the water pipeline extension would not be built. Water would continue to be provided for livestock at existing water locations.

Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Detailed Analysis

Hauling water for livestock distribution to the area of the proposed project was also considered as an alternative method for achieving project goals. Water hauling was eliminated from detailed analysis for the following reasons:

1. The two track roads in the Cottonwood Allotment are not suitable for water hauling during the winter grazing period.

2. Water hauling would be more economically costly in the long term.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The affected environment is described in the Schell Grazing EIS\MFP and the cultural resources summary for the Ely District. The Cottonwood Allotment (00132) encompasses approximately 50,000 acres of public land and no private land. The allotment is situated in southern Spring Valley east of Highway 93 South, in the east middle portion of the Ely District, and is approximately 50 air miles southeast of Ely. The allotment occurs within the South Spring Valley Watershed. The allotment is bordered on the west by the Fortification Range Mountains. A portion of the Fortification Range WSA occurs within the allotment. The allotment is completely fenced. Elevations range from 6,000 feet at valley bottom to about 7,800 feet in the Fortification Range. Average annual precipitation is 8 - 10 inches.

Range

The Cottonwood Allotment was evaluated in 1993 and a Final Multiple Use Decision for the allotment was issued in May, 1997. According to the decision, authorized livestock grazing on the native range of the allotment is as follows:

Livestock No.	Kind	Period of Use	%Public Land	Active Use
250	Cattle	11/01 – 06/15	100	1,862 AUMs

There are four fenced crested wheatgrass seedings in the allotment, which are grazed on a rotation basis. Up to 386 AUMs cattle grazing use may be made in the seedings in a grazing year, bringing the total annual authorized grazing use to 2,248 AUMs. No sheep grazing is authorized in the allotment. The permittee authorized to graze the allotment is Huntsman Ranches.

A portion of the allotment occurs within the Wilson Creek Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA), however that portion of the allotment through which the pipeline extension would pass does not occur within the HMA and is entirely fenced off from the HMA.

Vegetation

The three main native vegetative types within the Cottonwood Allotment are salt desert shrub, northern desert shrub (big sagebrush types) and pinyon - juniper. The main vegetative type within the project area is a black sagebrush/Indian ricegrass/needle grass type (028AY013NV). A second type that covers a large acreage is a Wyoming sagebrush/Indian ricegrass /needle grass type (028AY015NV). These two range sites commonly occur with each other. Four separate fenced crested wheatgrass seedings occur within the allotment.

Soils

The soils in the proposed pipeline area are predominately gravelly loams and gravelly sandy loams that are typical of Great Basin valleys. Soils vary from shallow to deep. The soils are gently sloping fan piedmont types. The potential for wind or water erosion is slight to moderate.

Cultural Resources

A Class III cultural resources inventory for the project area was done on May 30, 2000 (see report CRR-04-2003-1483N). No cultural resources were located during this inventory.

Special Status Species (Federally listed, proposed or candidate Threatened or Endangered Species, and State sensitive species)

There is one sage grouse strutting ground known to occur in the Cottonwood Allotment, located approximately seven miles south of the proposed pipeline. The ground was inspected in 2001 and found to be active. The proposed action would occur within year-long sage grouse habitat. Year-long use may occur at a very low level over the allotment depending on season, precipitation, and late season forage availability. Primary sage grouse period of use in the project area is winter.

Wilderness Values

The western one-fifth of the Cottonwood Allotment, or approximately 10,000 acres, occurs within the Fortification Range Wilderness Study Area (WSA). The water pipeline extension would not pass through the WSA. The water source for the pipeline, Cottonwood Spring, does occur within the WSA.

Wildlife

Dispersed pronghorn antelope use may occur throughout the sagebrush portions of the allotment. Mule deer and elk use is isolated, mostly in association with the more mountainous eastern third of the allotment.

Recreation

Recreation in this area includes large and small game hunting, wildlife observation and photography, wild horse observation, and occasional off road vehicle exploration.

Invasive, Non-native Species (including noxious weeds)

Currently the invasive weed species halogeton (Halogeton glomeratus) and the non-native grass cheatgrass (Bromus tectorum) have been identified in the project area. No noxious weeds are present in the project area.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The following resources do not occur and would not be impacted by the construction of the proposed water pipeline addition.

1) Floodplains and Wetlands.

2) Wilderness Values, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

3) Prime or Unique Farmlands.

The environmental consequences of the following resources have been considered.

4) Native American religious concerns.

A tribal coordination meeting was held at the Ely BLM Field Office on October 17, 2002. No concerns were expressed by Native Americans in regard to the proposed action.

5) Environmental Justice.

No disparate impacts would occur to low income or minority peoples.

6) Paleontological and Historic Resource Values.

No paleontological or historic resource values were discovered during field survey.

7) Hazardous Wastes.

Hazardous wastes do not exist on the project site nor would they be introduced by the proposed action.

8) Migratory birds.

Impacts to migratory birds would not occur because of mitigation built into the proposed action.

9) Riparian Areas.

No negative impacts would result from the proposed project to the 5.0 acres of riparian vegetation located at the Cottonwood Spring Source.

10) Water quality (Drinking/ground).

Sources of drinking water do not occur within the impact area of the proposed action. The ground water, located in a deep aquifer, would not be impacted by the proposed action.

Anticipated impacts of the Proposed Action

Impacts have been analyzed in the Programmatic EA with the following site specific impacts added:

1. Range

Specific impacts include improved distribution of cattle grazing and improved utilization levels of key forage species in the Cottonwood Allotment. Improvement in cattle distribution and utilization should result in enhanced forage production, ground cover, vigor, and range condition and trend. Areas of overutilization should be reduced, due to improved livestock distribution and no increase in cattle numbers. Water and forage availability would increase for livestock and wildlife. Progress would be made in achieving Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration.

2. Soils

Short-term impacts to soils (impacts during the first year following pipeline construction) from pipeline installation activities should be minimal. A minor increase in soil compaction and disturbance to soil structure could result, mainly due to vehicle and equipment activity during construction. Minor soil loss could occur. A one to two foot wide strip of soil to a depth of one to three feet would be disturbed to bury the pipeline. In the long-term (after the first year following pipeline construction) it is expected that soil characteristics would benefit from the improved livestock distribution resulting from the new water development. Increased forage production and an improved ground cover should result in less soil erosion and better soil/water

relations. New disturbed areas of soil of approximately ½ acre would develop around each new trough location.

3. Vegetation

In the short-term, some vegetation would be crushed or trampled during pipeline construction. No trees grow along the pipeline route, thus no trees have to be cut or removed. In the long-term, after the first year following pipeline construction, vegetation along the pipeline corridor should begin to return to a composition similar to what existed prior to pipeline construction. The pipeline is expected to lead to vegetation impacts such as improved vigor, increased cover, increased production and forage availability, and an improved rangeland trend as a result of better cattle distribution. Native plants would be allowed to complete a growth cycle. New disturbed areas of vegetation of approximately ½ acre would develop around each new trough location.

4. Wildlife

In the short-term, during construction of the pipeline, resident wildlife along the pipeline corridor, including birds, small mammals, rodents, and reptiles could be temporarily disturbed and displaced by pipeline construction activity. In the long-term, after pipeline construction, wildlife habitat would be enhanced and expanded by improved ground cover and a better quantity and availability of forage. Antelope in particular could benefit. The short term nature of the increased water availability would not result in year-long increases in antelope use. Some wildlife drownings could occur even though wildlife escape ramps would be placed in the troughs. Elk and deer do not occur within the project area.

5. Special Status Species (Federally listed, proposed or candidate Threatened or Endangered Species, and State sensitive species)

Sage grouse would be indirectly affected by the proposed action or the resulting grazing use. Principal use in the allotment is limited to the winter period when sage grouse forage almost solely on sagebrush and other shrubs. Livestock primarily utilize dormant grasses and winterfat in this area during the winter period, neither of which is a primary winter forage for sage grouse. With improved livestock distribution, lighter grazing pressure in other areas of the allotment could benefit sage grouse by increasing vegetative cover.

6. Cultural Resources

There would be no impacts to any Historic Properties or paleontological resources by this project. There also would be no impacts to cultural resource values by the proposed project.

7. Recreation

The proposed water pipeline extension would not interfere with recreation activities. There would be no impacts to existing recreational activities. The pipeline corridor is not expected to lead to increased off-highway vehicle (OHV) use in the area.

8. Visual Resources (VRM)

The pipeline ditch would introduce visual contrasts into the landscape. Shrubs, grasses, and forbs would be trampled during pipeline installation; however, vegetation is expected to return to a composition similar to what existed prior to pipeline construction. The pipeline and three water troughs would not be visible from the county road that is from three to five miles west of the proposed pipeline extension. Vegetative and topographic screening would hide the contrasts. The proposed project is consistent with the Visual Resource Management Class IV objectives for this area. According to BLM Manual H-8410-1, the VRM Class IV Objectives are as follows:

"The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements." {form, line, color, and texture}.

9. Air Quality

A short term, minor, and local impact to air quality could result due to ground disturbance by vehicles and construction activities. There will be dust associated with livestock use around the troughs. Impacts would be temporary and would dissipate quickly.

10. Social and Economic Values

Lifestyles of local residents would not be impacted. The proposed range improvement would provide economic benefits for the livestock permittee in this allotment by improving the efficiency of his overall operation. The proposed pipeline would facilitate livestock management. Installation of projects which serve the public interest could improve the relationship between the local public and the BLM.

11. Invasive, Non-native Species (including noxious weeds)

Pipeline building activity should not result in an increase in noxious weeds to the area impacted by pipeline construction. The Risk Factor for spread of noxious weeds is low at the present time (See Appendix II for the Noxious Weed Risk Assessment). Pipeline building activity could result in an increase in invasive or nonnative species in the project area. The disturbed area would be monitored on a regular basis for noxious or invasive weeds or nonnative species. Control

treatments would be initiated on noxious weed populations that become established in the project area.

12. Water Quantity/Spring Source

Implementing the proposed action would result in an inconsequential increase in water use that originates at Cottonwood Spring. The same number of cattle that are currently using the existing Cottonwood Springs Water Pipeline will continue to use that project plus the new trough locations. Water *availability* in the native range of the Cottonwood Allotment would increase for livestock and wildlife to the amount provided by three 550 gallon powder river troughs during the period January 1 to March 15 each year, depending on water flow availability and weather conditions. Depending on spring flow, small overflow ponds would also provide water during the same time period.

A BLM resource specialist I.D. team conducted a proper functioning condition study (PFC) at Cottonwood Spring on August 1, 2003. The spring was rated at Proper Functioning Condition. The team determined that no negative impacts would be caused to the spring by the proposed project.

13. Cumulative Impacts

According to the 1994 BLM Handbook "Guidelines for Assessing and Documenting Cumulative Impacts," the analysis can be focused on those issues and resource values identified during scooping that are of major importance. The issue of major importance has been identified as the need to improve the rangeland health and watershed condition. A general discussion of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions follows:

Past Actions

There have been limited previous actions occurring in the project area. There has been historical mineral mining in the area, associated with the Atlanta Mine, which is located approximately nine miles south of the project area. There has been no oil or gas development or exploration in the project area. There has been no woodcutting or pinyon nut gathering. Hunting, wildlife viewing, and other recreational activities including off highway vehicle (OHV) use have been minimal. Two track roads associated with these activities are not extensive and have not altered the landscape. Wildfires have been very infrequent in the Wyoming sagebrush and salt desert shrub vegetation communities in the area. Wildlife use has not been intensive in the area. Livestock grazing has been intensive historically. There has been a lack of range improvements to distribute cattle use and improve forage utilization.

Present Actions

Current activities or projects occurring in the project area are very limited. There is no current mineral mining or oil and gas exploration. Wood cutting and pinyon nut gathering are

nonexistent. Recreational activities including OHV use are currently minimal. There is only occasional use of the two track roads in the area. There have been no recent wildfires. Current livestock grazing and wildlife use are not intensive in the area and are not fundamentally altering the plant communities. Implementing the proposed action would contribute to achieving the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration and healthy rangelands.

Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

No other range improvements have been planned for the project area. If constructed, the pipeline would improve grazing management, resulting in improved range condition and vegetative conditions. Increased cattle trailing along the two-track road near the pipeline would occur as waters are turned on and off. There would be little cumulative visual impairment to the area as a result of the pipeline project. An increase in winter wildlife use could occur if the water development is constructed. There are no anticipated increases in mining, woodcutting, pinyon nut gathering, or OHV use in the area in the reasonably foreseeable future. Vehicle traffic along the two-track road would increase mildly for maintenance of the pipeline and troughs. A slight increase in hunting and wildlife viewing could occur.

There have been limited previous actions occurring in the same area. Past and present actions have resulted in less than desirable range and watershed conditions. The proposed action in association with other actions would improve range and watershed conditions.

Anticipated Impacts of the No Action Alternative

According to the No Action Alternative, the water pipeline extension would not be constructed, and impacts as described above would not occur. Livestock distribution and forage utilization would not improve. Areas of overutilization would not be reduced. Water and forage availability would not increase for livestock or wildlife. Wildlife habitat would not be enhanced. There would be no economic benefit to the livestock permittee. Vegetative composition, production, cover, and vigor would not improve. There would be no impact to soils, special status species, recreation, visual resources, air quality, or invasive, non-native species (including noxious weeds) from the no action alternative. No progress would be made towards achieving Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, land use plan objectives, or other vegetation objectives.

V. PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

Appropriate mitigation measures have been included in the proposed action (Section II). No additional mitigation measures are proposed as a result of the analysis of the potential impacts.

VI. SUGGESTED MONITORING

Suggested monitoring has been included as part of the proposed action (Section II). No additional monitoring is suggested as a result of the analysis of potential impacts.

VII. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Intensity of Public Interest and Record of Contacts

A summary of the proposed action was originally posted on the Ely BLM Website on March 25, 2003. Public input following the posting prompted BLM to review and improve the public participation process and decision making process for range improvement EA's. As a result, the original EA has been reviewed and revised. The revised EA will also be posted for a thirty day public review and comment period on the BLM Website. A hard copy of the EA will also be mailed to those interested publics who request a copy. Changes in the EA based upon public input will be made as appropriate. The public will be notified when the EA is completed and the Decsion Record/Finding of no Significant Impact (DR/FONSI) is igned. The DR/FONSI will also be posted on the Website and a hard copy mailed to requesting interested publics. The signed DR/FONSI initiates a 15 day protest period and a 30 day appeal period.

The Ely Field Office mails an annual Consultation, Cooperation, and Coordination (CCC) Letter to individuals and organizations that have expressed an interest in rangeland management related actions. Those receiving the annual CCC Letter have the opportunity to request from the Field Office more information regarding specific actions. Those requesting notification of range improvement actions are requested to respond if they want to receive a copy of the final EA and signed Decision Record/Finding of No Significant Impacts. The following individuals and organizations, who were sent the annual CCC letter on January 10, 2003, have requested additional information regarding range developments or range improvement programs within the Cottonwood Allotment:

Mr. Gary McCuin, Department of Agriculture (Reno)
Betsy Macfarlan, Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition
Mr. John McLain, Resource Concepts Inc.
Katie Fite, Commitee for Idaho's High Desert
Jon Marvel, Western Watersheds Project
Steven J. Carter, Carter Cattle Co.
Natural Resources Conservation Service
George I. Andrus
Mr. Ben Roberts, Great Basin NP
Mr. Dan Heinz
Amy Lavoie, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Shelley Hartmann
Jule Wadsworth
Melvin Gardner
Lincoln County Comission

Record of Personal Consultation and Coordination

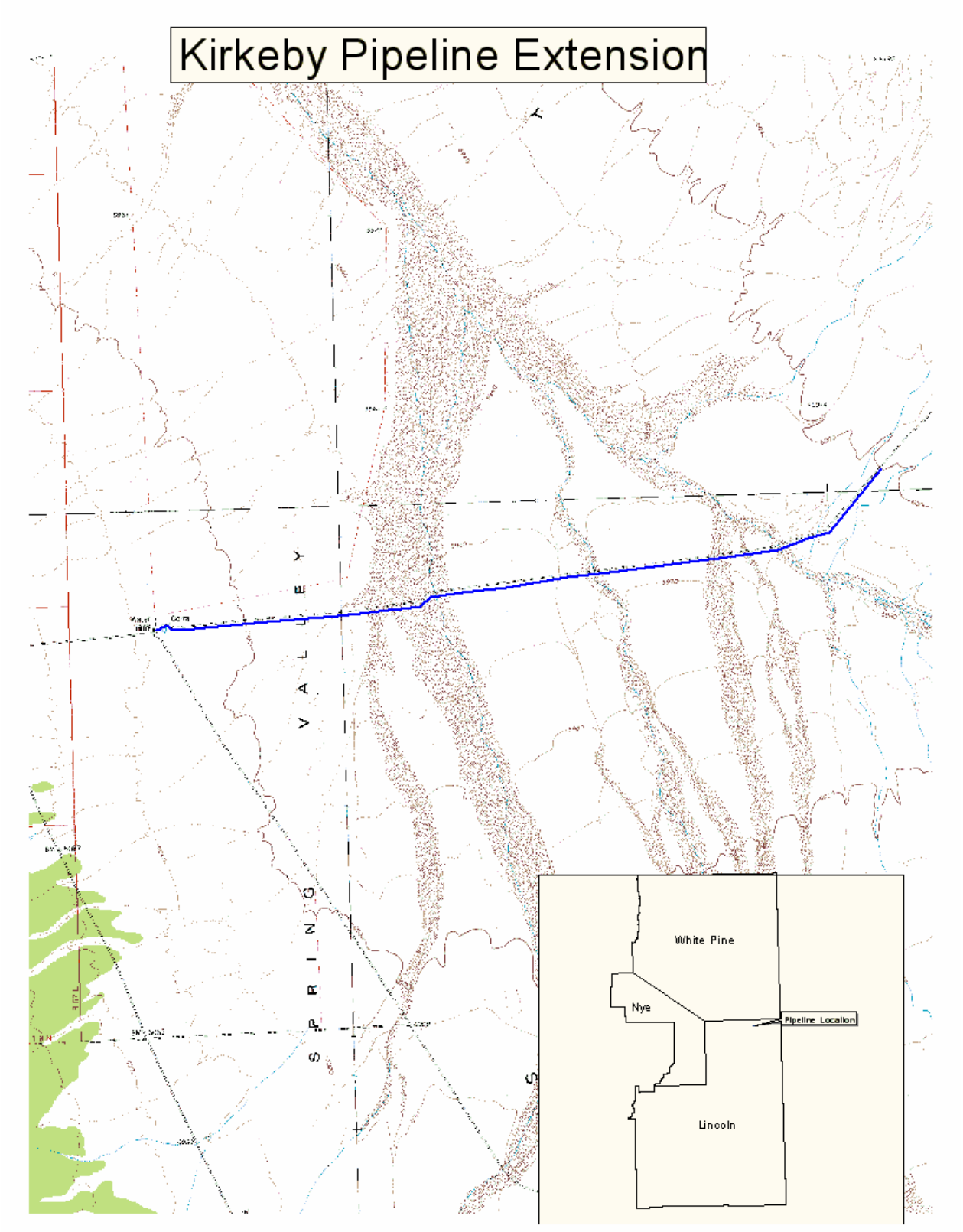
Lyman Huntsman (Permittee - Cottonwood Allotment)
Paul Branham (Foreman - Huntsman Ranches)
Curt Baughman (NDOW)
Jon Marvel (Western Watersheds Project)

The proposed action was discussed with representatives of the Ely Shoshone Tribe during the Ely Field Office Tribal Coordination Meeting held on October 17, 2002. No concerns were identified during this meeting.

Internal District Review

Shane Deforest	Threatened and Endangered Species/Riparian/Migratory Birds/Wildlife/Noxious Weeds
Jack Tribble	Visual Resources/Wilderness/Recreation
Jared Bybee	Wild Horses and Burros
Mark Lowrie	Rangeland Resources, Environmental Assessment, Weed Risk Assessment
Melissa Whittemore	Environmental Coordination
Jake Rajala	Environmental Coordination
Chris Mayer	Rangeland Resources Review
Jeff Brower	Soil/Water/Air
Carolyn Sherve-Bybee	Cultural Resources
Elvis Wall/Curtis Tucker	Native American Religious Concerns
Sue Baughman	External Outreach
Brenda Linnell	Lands
Harry Rhea	Operations & Weed Management
Larry Martin	Engineering & Operations
Fred Fisher	Operations
Lynn Bjorklund	Geology

MAP A


Kirkeby Pipeline Extension
SPRING VALLEY
White Pine
Nye
Pipeline Location
Lincoln

APPENDIX I
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

A complete listing of standard operating procedures (SOP's) is provided in the Programmatic EA on pages 5-8. The following SOP's that apply to the proposed action should be followed for the pipeline project:

1. Water at all spring developments will be maintained at the source.

2. Maintenance of pipelines and spring developments will be accomplished by operator(s) through cooperative agreements with the BLM, or through range improvement permits.

3. Project area cleanup will be accomplished by removing all refuse to an approved sanitary landfill.

4. Access will be via existing roads and trails whenever possible. Where existing roads are not available, off road travel will be kept to the minimum necessary for construction.

5. Removal of vegetation will be held to the minimum necessary for construction, access, and to provide for safety.

6. If road maintenance is necessary, it will be conducted by methods approved by the BLM (roads and ditch, maintenance specification drawing NV-0409110-441).

7. Wildlife escape ramps (bird ladders) will be placed within all open water holding facilities.

The "no activity" period for all management actions in migratory bird habitat is from 5-1 to 7/15 unless a survey is done to determine no migratory bird breeding or nesting is occurring in the area.

For any activity scheduled between 5/1 and 7/15 the following must take place:

> Area which is going to be disturbed must be clearly identified on appropriate maps.
>
> The wildlife team will conduct breeding bird surveys to identify if migratory bird breeding or nesting is occurring in the area.

APPENDIX II
NOXIOUS WEED RISK ASSESSMENT

On January 9, 2002 a Noxious Weed Risk Assessment was completed by Mark Lowrie, rangeland management specialist, for the Cottonwood (Kirkeby) Water Pipeline Extension, located in Lincoln County, Nevada. The legal location for the pipeline is T. 9N., R. 68E., Sections 20, 21, 22, 29, 30. This project will disturb approximately 6 acres of public lands.

Factor 1 assesses the likelihood of noxious weed species spreading to the project area.

For this project, the factor rates as (low,3) at the present time. This means that noxious weeds have been located adjacent to, but not within, the project area. No noxious weeds were observed in the project area during the cultural clearance completed on June 6, 2000 and no concerns about weeds were recorded. The Ely Field Office BLM weed map together with ground observation indicate that Spotted knapweed is present along State Highway 93 approximately 12 miles northwest of the project area however no noxious weeds are present along County Roads 47 and 457 leading southeasterly from Highway 93 to the project area.

Factor 2 assesses the consequences of noxious weed establishment in the project area.

For this project, the factor rates as (low,3) at the present time. This means that there is very little likelihood that noxious weeds will spread to the area disturbed by the proposed pipeline. The project size and degree of surface disturbance will not be extensive. No cumulative effects of noxious weeds spreading to the native plant community are expected.

The Risk Rating is obtained by multiplying Factor 1 by Factor 2.

For this project, the Risk Rating is (low,9) at the present time. This means that the project can proceed as planned. The BLM heavy equipment used to rip in the pipeline should be clean prior to entering the project area. Control treatments would be initiated on noxious weed populations that get established in the project area. The pipeline should be monitored the first year following pipeline construction for noxious weeds. It is possible noxious weed seed could be imported to the area via livestock, wildlife, people, vehicles, or other modes of transport.

Reviewed by: _____ Date: